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5th Waxing of Kason 1383 ME

15 May 2021

Appointment and Duty Assignment of Deputy Minister

THE State Administration Council appointed and assigned Dr Aye Tun to the duty of Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Health and Sports, under Section 419 of the State Constitution.

By Order,

Aung Lin Dwe
Lieutenant-General
Secretary
State Administration Council

Govt conserves wall paintings at Tilawka Guru Cave in Sagaing

CONSERVATION works are being conducted on ancient mural paintings of the Nyaung Yan era in Tilawka Guru Cave in Thawta Pan Ward of Sagaing, according to the Department of Archaeology and National Museum (Sagaing branch).

The wall paintings were drawn in AD 17 and represent the artworks of the Nyaung Yan era. The artworks are more than 350 years old, and so conservation works are conducted with more than K80 million of the 2020-2021FY. The operations were launched in March, and now 20 per cent of works completed, said the deputy head of the department.

“The paintings of 28 Buddha statues and more than 30 Jataka tales, including ten great



The Tilawka Guru Cave was constructed in 1034 ME. According to the ancient record, it was constructed in the term of King Anauk Phet Lun in 967 ME.

birth stories of the Buddha, were depicted on the cave wall. The lo-

tus bloom and Buddha footprint are also painted on the roof of

the cave. Therefore, the officials conduct conservation works to

preserve the mural paintings and history by using modern chemicals and techniques. If the people visit here, they can see the unique architecture and wall paintings of Nyaung Yan era,” he said.

The Tilawka Guru Cave was constructed in 1034 ME. According to the ancient record, it was constructed in the term of King Anauk Phet Lun in 967ME.

The cave was made of stone, including brick, and it is a unique architecture of the Nyaung Yan era. There are three entrance gates, and we can see six meditation rooms, Gandhakuti and corridors to walk. The mural paintings are depicted along the way to the cave.—Min Htet Aung (Mandalay Sub-Printing House) /GNLM



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Republic of the Union of Myanmar State Administration Council Nine Objectives

1. Political affairs

- (a) To build a Union based on democracy and federalism, through a disciplined and genuine multiparty democratic system that is fair and just.
- (b) To emphasize the achievement of enduring peace for the entire nation in line with the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA).
- (c) To continue implementing the principle of peaceful co-existence among countries through an independent, active and non-aligned foreign policy.

2. Economic affairs

- (a) To enhance production based on agriculture and livestock through modern techniques and strengthen all-round development in other sectors of the economy.

- (b) To develop a stable market economy and promote international investment in order to enhance the economic development of the entire National people.
- (c) To promote and support local businesses to create employment opportunities and increase domestic production.

3. Social affairs

- (a) To ensure a strong and dynamic Union spirit, the genuine spirit of patriotism.
- (b) To respect and promote the customs and traditions of all National peoples and preserve and safeguard their cultural heritage and national characteristics.
- (c) To enhance the health, fitness and education quality of the entire nation.

Five-Point Road Map of the State Administration Council

1. The Union Election Commission will be reconstituted and its mandated tasks, including the scrutiny of voter lists, shall be implemented in accordance with the law.
2. Effective measures will be taken with added momentum to prevent and manage the COVID-19 pandemic.
3. Actions will be taken to ensure the speedy recovery of businesses from the impact of COVID-19.
4. Emphasis will be placed on achieving enduring peace for the entire nation in line with the agreements set out in the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement.
5. Upon accomplishing the provisions of the state of emergency, free and fair multiparty democratic elections will be held in line with the 2008 Constitution, and further work will be undertaken to hand over State duties to the winning party in accordance with democratic standards.

Working committee on facilitation of trade and goods holds meeting



CHAIRMAN of the Working Committee on Ensuring the Smooth Flow of Trade and Goods Deputy Minister for Commerce U Nyunt Aung, the Permanent Secretary for Commerce, Secretary of the working committee, officials from the Myanmar Port Authority and the Myanmar Rice Federation discussed export of agricultural products yesterday evening in Yangon.

Afterwards, they visited Sule Port No (7) and inspected

rice loading for export to Bangladesh on MV VTC Planet.

As of 12 May, the 2020-2021FY, 6,886,004 tonnes of agricultural products: 1,306,300 tonnes of rice and broken rice; 2,035,113 tonnes of corn; 1,112,963 tonnes of various beans; 217,449 tonnes of sesame seeds; 208,978 tonnes of raw rubber and 2,005,202 tonnes of other agricultural products.

A total of 6,886,004 tonnes were exported through Yangon

International Ports. Of them, a total of 3,445,810 tonnes of agricultural products were exported between February and 12 May 2021.

It is reported that traders and business persons can contact the Working Committee Telephone No 09-664075683; 09-687635943; 09-676320826; 09-664596327 or Central Committee Telephone No. 067-409671; 067-409672 and 067-409673 for assistance. — MNA

Tatmadaw purchases 30,755-viss onion from Myittha farmers

THE Tatmadaw members from the Central Command visited the farms of local farmers in the villages in Myittha Township, Mandalay Region. They bought 30,755 visses of onion at a price that local farmers could sell yesterday.

Regional Tatmadaw members have been buying farmers' crops at a price that

they could sell. The COVID-19 outbreak has disrupted transport and make it difficult for local farmers to sell their crops and causing damage to crops.

It is reported that they will continue to buy the seasonal crops depending on the difficulties of the local farmers.—MNA



For reducing edible oil consumption

Edible oil crops are involved on the list of primary export items of Myanmar. As individual people of Myanmar consumes 4.5 vissees of edible oil per year, its consumption rate is too high. Import of edible oil abroad spends much foreign exchange because edible oil cannot be produced at home sufficiently. **As it is necessary to ensure edible oil sufficiency at home, efforts must be made for thriving edible oil crop plantations in the respective areas so as to increase the per-acre yield of edible oil crops. The Ministry of Health and Sports and the Ministry of Information must continuously perform the educative tasks for reducing edible oil consumption.**

(Excerpt from the speech to the Management Committee meeting made by the Republic of the Union of Myanmar State Administration Council Chairman Senior General Min Aung Hlaing on 11 May 2021)

Union Minister U Aung Naing Oo inspects investment activities in Mandalay Region

UNION Minister for Investment and Foreign Economic Relations (MIFER) U Aung Naing Oo visited KM Terminal and Logistics Limited near Myit Nge Railway Station, Mandalay Region, on the morning of 15 May. At the company's meeting room, the Union Minister was briefed on the expansion of the dry port project phase-2 with increased investment and the current status of the phase-1 operation by U Win Naing Nyunt, Director of Mother Logistic Co., Ltd.

After hearing the report, the Union Minister explained the potential of logistic sectors development in Myanmar and existing and future regional co-operation programmes, future development strategies for dry port business, the private sector cooperation for the human resource development and promotion of investment in the logistic sectors.

In the afternoon, the Union Minister and the Chairman of Mandalay Region Administration Council attended the meeting with investors at Pullman Mandalay Mingalar Hotel in Mandalay.

At the meeting, the Union Minister briefed the current development of political situation



and called for the public and private sectors collaboration to mitigate the serious impact on economy during the political transition.

The Union Minister said that Myanmar's economy has not been spared from the reversed impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, and effective and efficient cooperation with the government and the stakeholders are crucial for recovery of the country's economy in short term period.

The Union Minister explained the future programmes laid down by State Administration Council particularly for economic affairs emphasizing the agriculture and livestock sector as priority areas since most suitable and relevant to current situation of the country, and to encourage the local investors to promote their investment was also highlighted in programmes.

The Union Minister informed the investors and developers that MIFER, a focal

agency responsible for coordination and facilitation among relevant government agencies, is providing necessary assistance not only for existing investors but also for expansion and new investment, and also explained the current reform measures, under the guidance of State Administration Council, to facilitate the businesses by reducing regulatory burden.

The Union Minister also explained the current banking issues due to the political agi-

tators, and called for business community to cooperate with government to stabilize the banking business building mutual trust.

The Union Minister also updated the existing cooperation with ASEAN member states and benefits from regional cooperation programmes despite the challenge ahead.

Afterwards, Chairman U Maung Ko of the Mandalay Regional Administration Council discussed the strategies and recovery plan being undertaking by the Mandalay Regional government to mitigate the impacts of COVID-19. Then, the investors raised some implementation constraints to be coordinated with relevant government agencies. The Union Minister and the Chairman of Regional Administration Council coordinated and fulfilled the needs of the investors.

Members of the Mandalay Region Administration Council, officials from the Ministry of Investment and Foreign Economic Relations, the Chairman and Vice-Chairmen of the Mandalay Region Chambers of Commerce and Industries and the investors and traders attended the meeting. — MNA

Insurgent groups attack police station, security members

THE armed insurgent groups attacked the security forces in some townships.

On 14 May, the terrorists launched an attack on Kalay Myoma police station in Kalay Township of Sagaing Region. The security members conducted counterattack and blocked the way of insurgents. The police arrested five men, including

Hla Myo Aung, who lives in Aung Thitsar Ward, at the corner of No (3) B.E.M.S near Shwe Bon Tha football stadium together with one handmade bomb and two motorcycles.

Similarly, about 40 insurgents attacked the police with small weapons, including handmade guns, percussion rifles and handmade bombs, when the po-

lice conducted patrolling at the middle school in Lanmadaw street of No (6) Ward in Myingyan Township of Mandalay Region.

A police member was injured in the attack and taken to Tatmadaw hospital.

The security forces accelerate their security measures to uncover the armed insurgents. — MNA

24 new cases of COVID-19 reported on 15 May, total figure rises to 143,059

MYANMAR'S COVID-19 positive cases rose to **143,059** after **24 new cases** were reported on 15 May 2021 according to the Ministry of Health and Sports. Among these confirmed cases, **132,100** have been discharged from hospitals. —MNA

Central institute of civil service (upper Myanmar) to reopen training courses



CHAIRMAN of the Union Civil Board and Board Member U San Myint arrived at the Central Institute of Civil Service (Upper Myanmar) in Zeepin Gyi village in PyinOoLwin and inspected preparation for the institute in line with COVID-19 preventive measures to open civil service training courses that have been suspended since the COVID-19 outbreak.

During the inspection tour, the Chairman met the rector and officials of the institute. He discussed emphasizing the teaching on national defence and security disciplines in addition to the regular courses taught by the institute. He instructed them to train in increasing the spirit of

civil service personnel in order to serve the people by following the rules, increasing cooperation, mutual respect, working in an organization, modernizing curricula, and coordinating with related universities.

The Union Civil Service Board will launch a primary officer (special) training course and Postgraduate Diploma Course in Public Service Management from 7 June. Basic training for clerks, basic training for junior officers, and basic training for officers will be opened at the Central Institute of Civil Service (Upper Myanmar). It will continue to provide training within a specified period. – MNA/GNLM

Nay Pyi Taw Development Bank holds annual meeting of 2019-2020FY

NAY PYI TAW Development Bank held its annual meeting of the 2019-2020 financial year via videoconferencing yesterday. The stakeholders of the Nay Pyi Taw Development Committee and officials of the bank joined the meeting.

Nay Pyi Taw Council Chairman Dr Maung Maung Naing, in his capacity as Mayor and Patron of the bank's Board of Directors, discussed the Financial Institutions Law, Myanmar Companies Law, Central Bank of Myanmar Law and the use of IT in the Digital Banking sector as per Myanmar auditing standards.



Then, Deputy Mayor of Nay Pyi Taw U Maung Maung, in his capacity as the chairman of the bank, presented banking processes conducted in the 2019-2020FY and CEO Aung

Kyaw Nyein read out the annual report of the 2019-2020FY.

The meeting also approved the BOD members for 2020-2021FY.

Daw Khin Myo Aung, Senior Manager of Win Thin & Associates Certified Public Accountants, read the audit report of 2019-2020FY. At the same time, Deputy Managing Director U Soe Tun clarified the further work plans of the bank.

After that, Nay Pyi Taw Council Chairman expressed words of thanks and concluded the meeting.—MNA

Low supply hikes up durian price this year



The durians from Kyunsu, Myeik and Taninthayi townships are highly competitive in the domestic market, regardless of the low yield as against that of last year.

DURIAN sellers in Myeik District, Taninthayi Region, earn a healthy profit due to the price gain amid the low yield this year, said a durian seller.

“The production declined this year. However, we are happy with the higher price. The price of a big sized durian soared to K5,000-6,000 from K3,000. The small durian also fetched a high of K1,000-1,500. Shanchaung Road in Myeik is crowded with durian sellers and buyers this year”, said a seller U Lwin Aye.

Last year, the demand sharply fell owing to the travel restrictions triggered by the COVID-19.

“The local community

mostly depends on horticulture and fishery businesses. Durian sees higher purchase orders from Yangon this year. Despite low yield, the sellers are satisfied with a high price and steady demand”, said a seasonal fruit seller.

Additionally, Thailand is buying the durian seeds at K6,000 per viss (1.6 kg). So, nothing goes to waste. Both the flesh and seeds are marketable, she continued.

The durians from Kyunsu, Myeik and Taninthayi townships are highly competitive in the domestic market, regardless of the low yield as against that of last year. — Myint Oo (Myeik)/GNLM

SAC Information Team holds 5/2021 press conference

THE Information Team of the State Administration Council held a 5/2021 press conference at the Ministry of Information yesterday. Team Leader Maj-Gen Zaw Min Tun, UEC Member U Khin Maung Oo, CBM Deputy Governor U Win Thaw and representatives of the departmental information team replied to the questions raised by the media.

Information Team Leader Maj-Gen Zaw Min Tun, through PowerPoint presentation, explained the efforts for the education sector, the SAC performance in April, the declaration of terrorist groups against NUG, CRPH and PDF and the news about the insurgents who launched bomb attacks.

Then, UEC Member U Khin Maung Oo clarified the



Press conference 5/2021 of the SAC Information Team in progress.

new UEC performance, voting frauds found before and after the 2020 General Election, oppression to commit voting frauds, the UEC announcements regarding the findings of voter lists in daily newspapers and the plans to release the inventory of the inspection

findings. The journalists raised questions on the facts they wanted to know. Maj-Gen Zaw Min Tun, UEC Member U Khin Maung Oo, CBM Deputy Governor U Win Thaw, and the departmental information team representatives gave the answers. Then, the event has concluded.

Those attending the press conference viewed round facts about the press conference, endeavours of the current UEC, the inspection of voter lists and necessary documents.

The press conference was also attended by reporters from local news agencies, daily newspapers, local TV broadcasting stations and local-based foreign news agencies. — MNA

Rioters set fire to state-owned buildings and homes



Ravages in the aftermath of arson attacks.

RIOTERS set fire on state-owned buildings and homes of the residents in townships of Magway Region, Sagaing Region and Bago Region on 14 May.

Due to arson attacks, two houses of the teachers from the Basic Education Primary School in Nhatpyarkyin village, Laungshay town, Gangaw Township, Magway Region. Su Paung checkpoint temporarily closed on YeU-Taze-Kalewa highway road

in Taze Township, Sagaing Region, was destroyed by fire.

Rioters also threw fire bottles, and homemade bombs to two houses of the ward administrators in Madauk town, Nyaunglebin Township, Bago Region, at 1 am on 14 May. However, no explosion nor fire broke out.

It is reported that investigations are underway to identify and take action against the arsonists responsible for the violent acts.—MNA

18 rioters arrested in Taunggyi and Yankin



Arrestees seen along with riot materials.

A total of 18 rioters were arrested with materials used in riots after the security forces dispersed the crowd yesterday morning in Taunggyi, Shan State and Yankin, Yangon Region.

Six men and two women

were detained from the riot on Yadanar Thiri road lane (4) and West Ring Road, Nyaung Phyu camp ward, Taunggyi, after the security forces dispersed the group of about 40 rioters yesterday morning.

About 20 rioters gathered

near Moe Kaung bus stop yesterday morning in Yankin Township, Yangon and 12 were arrested.

It is reported that rioters who are under arrest will be taken actions under the law. —MNA

Gun owners voluntarily surrender their firearms

PEACEFUL people who do not want to take arms voluntarily handed over their handmade guns and percussion, lock firearms to security forces through the states/regions administrators.

On 14 May, the people from Padaung Township gave 44 handmade guns, and the people from Nattalin Township of Bago Region transferred five percussion rifles to the security members on 14 May.

The security members systematically keep the firearms surrendered by the people. — MNA



Military tribunal to take effective action against terrorists in Mindat



THE military tribunal will be convened to try perpetrators of the terrorist attacks and those who encouraged the violence and crimes under the existing laws in Mindat Township of Chin State.

The Martial Law Order was issued on 13 May to promote the rule of law and regional peace more effectively in Mindat when the terrorist attacks and violence were escalated, although administration officials, department officials, elders of the town and religious leader discussed peace and the rule of law in the region.

On 14 May, security forces

were attacked on the way to Mindat by about 1,000 rioters with guns and homemade mines, causing six vehicles were destroyed by fire, and some soldiers were killed and disappeared.

During a total of 5 attacks on the security forces on Matupi-Mindat road, one man was dead, and one percussion lock firearm and four homemade mines were confiscated.

In addition to the armed attacks on security forces, the terrorists opened fire to the Myanma Economic Bank and the Township Police Station. They

abducted two assistant engineers from the Mindat District Electricity Office on 12 May.

Terrorists contacted the illegal CRPH and formed the illegitimate Public Administration Council intending to undermine the security and safety of the region. It is reported that security forces will work day and night for the peace and security of the town with the cooperation of the residents, and violators of crimes to be tried by the military tribunal will be taken effective action under the existing laws. — MNA

Rockets fired at Toungoo airbase, military outfits



THE terrorists (under scrutiny) used 107MM rockets to attack the Toungoo airbase and the military outfits in Bago Region yesterday.

During their attack, one rocket fell at about 100 metres from Toungoo military outfits and did not explode. Another

three fell at about 100metres, 200 metres and 350 metres from the Air station and exploded. There were no reports of injuries and damages to the buildings.

When security forces conducted a land clearance operation, they found six 107MM

rockets attached with one 100W battery, one drip bottle and one clip used by the insurgents in the open field at about 1,300 metres from Aike Sauk Village.

The security members conduct investigations to arrest the terrorists. — MNA

Tatmadaw medics ready to assist in Phaunggyi COVID-19 medical centre

THE COVID-19 prevention, control and treatment activities are being accelerated in the country, and the Tatmadaw medical team is dispatched to the COVID-19 treatment centre (Phaunggyi).

The 17th Tatmadaw medical team will transfer duties with the 16th batch of a 41-member medical team. Commander of Yangon Command Maj-Gen Nyunt Win Swe and other officials met and comforted the new medical team members yesterday morning.

Then, one of the medical team volunteers explained their aims for providing medical services, and the Commander gave the presents.

The current 37-member Tatmadaw volunteer medical team includes Pathologists, Radiologists, staff nurses and other-level medical staff.—MNA



Security forces continue confiscating weapons, equipment used in terrorist attacks

SECURITY forces confiscated one homemade gun and related equipment to be used in the terrorist attack from a resident of Moekyo village, Madaya Township, Mandalay Region and seven percussion lock firearms and 28 fibre helmets from Monywa Township, Sagaing Region on 14 May.

Similarly, security forces

searched the house of Daw Win, 40. They confiscated four long swords, four knives and related equipment used in terrorist attacks in Tamwe Township, Yangon Region.

It is reported that investigations are underway to take actions against the owners of the weapons and equipment used in terrorist attacks.—MNA



Agro exports show remarkable growth despite slump in other export groups

THE agricultural exports spike to a high of US\$3.289 billion in the past seven months (Oct-Apr) of the current financial year 2020-2021, despite the downward trend in other export groups amid the banking restriction tightened coronavirus containment measures in the border.

The figures reflect a significant rise of \$901 million this FY. The agro exports topped \$2.38 billion in the corresponding period of the 2019-2020FY, according to the trade figures released by the Ministry of Commerce.

The agricultural exports unexpectedly surge regardless of the impact of the coronavirus on foreign demand for other export groups such as fishery, livestock, mineral, forest products, finished industrial goods and other goods.

In the exports sector, the ag-



Myanmar agro-products are primarily exported to China, Singapore, Malaysia, the Philippines, Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, and Sri Lanka.

riculture industry performed the best, accounting for over 22 per cent of overall exports. The top export items in the agricultur-

al industry are rice and broken rice, pulses and beans and maize. Fruits and vegetables, sesame, dried tea leaves, sugar, and other

agro products are also shipped to other countries.

Myanmar agro-products are primarily exported to China, Sin-

gapore, Malaysia, the Philippines, Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, and Sri Lanka. Sometimes, the export market remains uncertain due to unsteady global demand.

The country requires specific export plans for each agro-product. They are currently exported to external markets based upon supply and demand. Contract farming systems, regional and state agriculture departments, exporters, traders, and some grower groups are required to meet production targets, said an official from the Agriculture Department.

The Commerce Ministry is working to help farmers deal with challenges such as high input costs, procurement of pedigree seeds, high cultivation costs, and erratic weather conditions. — KK/GNLM

Domestic gold price hits highest record of K1.7 mln in history, falls by K75,000 in a day

THE price of the gold bar hit a new high of over K1.7 million per tical (16.4 gm), which hit the highest record in the domestic gold history. However, the price fell by K75,000 per tical in a single day, according to Yangon Gold Entrepreneurs Association (YGEA).

The domestic gold price was recorded at its highest rate of K1,709,000 per tical on 12 May. Then, the price dramatically dropped to K1,634,000 per tical on 14 May, a drop by over K75,000 per tical in only one day.

The domestic gold price has significantly dropped, with instability in the global gold price and the US dollar exchange rate, said U Myo Myint, the chair of YGEA.

The global gold price was recorded at US\$1,834 per ounce on 12 May and it fell to \$1,823 per ounce on 14 May, with a significant tumble of \$11 in a day.

Meanwhile, the local dollar exchange rate was at K1,720 per dollar on 12 May but it plummeted to K1,675 per dollar on 14 May, dropping by K45 per dollar a day.

In January 2021, the domestic gold fetched the highest price of K1,336,000 per tical on 6 January. It reached the lowest price of K1,316,000 per tical on 28 January. In February, it got the lowest level of K1,340,000

(2 February) and the highest level of K1,410,000 (3 February). In March, the rate fluctuated between the most elevated of K1,391,000 (25 March) and the lowest of K1,302,000 (4 March). In April, the rate touched the lowest level of K1,389,000 (1 April) and the highest level of K1,455,000 (30 April), the gold traders said.

The local gold price reached the lowest level of K1,310,500 (2 September) and the highest level of K1,314,000 (1 September). In October, the rate ranged between K1,307,800 (30 October) and K1,316,500 (21 October). The rate fluctuated between the highest of K1,312,000 (16 November) and the lowest of K1,278,000 (28 November). In December, the pure yellow metal priced moved in the range of K1,275,000 (1 December) and K1,333,000 (28 December), according to the gold traders.

With global gold prices on the uptick, the domestic price hit fresh highs in 2019, reaching K1,000,000 per tical between 17 January and 21 February, crossing K1,100,000 (22 June to 5 August), climbing to over K1,200,000 (7 August-4 September), and then reaching an all-time record high of K1,300,000 on 5 September in 2019. — NN/GNLM

Fuel oil import down by 1 mln tonnes in seven months (Oct-Apr)

MYANMAR imported nearly US\$1.2 billion worth 2.7 million tonnes of diesel and gasoline during the past seven months (Oct-Apr) of the current financial year 2020-2021, indicating a sharp drop of 1 million tonnes (\$663.347 million) compared to the corresponding period of last year, according to the Ministry of Commerce.

In the current budget year, Myanmar imported 1.6 million tonnes (\$721.173 million) of diesel and over 1 million tonnes (536.113 million) of petrol, as per data of the Commerce Ministry.

Typically, a monthly oil import is estimated at \$400 million, yet the oil importers face banking restrictions for maritime trade. Oil importers via land border can use informal payment Hundi system instead, said an importer.

At present, the domestic fuel oil price has risen above 30 per cent per litre in three months. The heightened coronavirus restriction and possible lockdown in Asia sparked oil demand concerns, coupled with a strong dollar exchange rate.

The fuel oil was pegged at around K620 per litre for Octane 92, K750 for Octane 95, K660 for diesel and K670 for premium diesel in early February 2021 in the domestic retail market.

On 13 May, it rallied to the highest of K1,005 for Octane 92, K1,090 for Octane 95, K1,005 for

diesel and K1,015 for premium diesel, according to the local fuel oil market.

Domestic oil price is positively related to the global market and the dollar value. Crude oil futures have rallied to their highest finish in months, with WTI climbing above \$65 per barrel in mid-May.

Additionally, the foreign exchange rate also affects the petroleum price. The US dollar is gaining against Kyat in the local forex market starting from April, rising above K1,600 per dollar. In mid-February, a dollar was worth only K1,430.

Usually, Myanmar imports fuel oil primarily from Singapore, with monthly volumes touching 200,000 tonnes for gasoline and 400,000 tonnes for diesel. About 2,000 fuel stations and over 50 oil importer companies exist in

Myanmar, Myanmar Petroleum Trade Association stated.

Last year, the domestic oil prices declined from January owing to a fall in global oil prices. On 8 January 2020, oil prices were pegged at around K905 per litre for Octane 92, K995 for Octane 95, and K985 for diesel and premium diesel. Following the global market crashing, the domestic oil price plunged to more than 50 per cent in April against January's prices.

In late April 2020, the oil prices touched the lowest of K290-330 per litre for Octane 92, K430-455 for Octane 95, K435-465 for diesel, and K445-475 for premium diesel, according to the domestic oil market.

Ninety per cent of fuel oil in Myanmar is imported, while the remaining 10 per cent is produced locally. — KH/GNLM



In late April 2020, the oil prices touched the lowest of K290-330 per litre for Octane 92, K430-455 for Octane 95, K435-465 for diesel, and K445-475 for premium diesel, according to the domestic oil market.

Take lessons from findings of cultural heritage to shape glittering future

FOREIGNERS have been identifying Myanmar as a golden land in addition to the land of pagodas in successive eras. It is true that a lot of pagodas mushroom on the land of Myanmar. In fact, the land of Myanmar admits religious edifices not only of Buddhism but also of other religions such as Christianity, Islam and Hinduism.

Most of these religious edifices became ancient buildings constructed more than 100 years old. As such, these are involved in the list of ancient buildings.

Currently, Myanmar is making utmost efforts to recognize the international community over its tangible and intangible cultural heritage.

holding the seminars, workshops, and paper-reading sessions.

A paper-reading session on the conservation of ancient cultural heritage took place at the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Culture in Nay Pyi Taw in recent days. Departmental officials from the ministry read their research papers focusing on findings in ancient city-states, fine artworks, evidence in bronze and iron ages, and stone inscriptions.

Indeed, cultural heritage has the root causes of improving the current situation of the country. Such root causes proved the cultural standards of the past humans. That is why we need to take lessons from these past events so as to shape the glittering future for all.

The Department of Archaeology and National Museum under the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Culture strives for repair, renovation, maintenance and preservation of these ancient buildings not to lose architectural works and artistic works by applying various modern techniques and expertise of local and foreign experts.

The government has set many archaeological sites across the nation depending on locations of ancient cultural heritage while searching more and more archaeological sites in regions and states.

For the time being, the government is making efforts for seeking the recognition of the international community, particularly UNESCO, over the heritage sites of Myanmar. Thanks to the successive governments, ancient Pyu city-states of Myanmar, the Bagan archaeological area and others have been recognized by UNESCO and the ASEAN.

Currently, Myanmar is making utmost efforts to recognize the international community over its tangible and intangible cultural heritage. In this regard, it is necessary to enhance researchers and archaeologists' capacity in order to preserve the heritage with more arrangements of

Pandemic to be ‘far more deadly’ this year, WHO warns

The World Health Organization issued a grim warning on Friday that the second year of Covid-19 was set to be “far more deadly”, as Japan extended a state of emergency amid growing calls for the Olympics to be scrapped.

“WE’RE on track for the second year of this pandemic to be far more deadly than the first,” said WHO director-general Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus.

The mood also darkened in Japan where the coronavirus state of emergency took in another three regions just 10 weeks before the Olympics, while campaigners submitted a petition with more than 350,000 signatures calling for the Games to be cancelled.

With Tokyo and other areas already under emergency orders until the end of May, Hiroshima, Okayama and northern Hokkaido, which will host the Olympic marathon, will now join them.

Japanese public opinion is firmly opposed to holding the Games this summer.

Swiss tennis great Roger Federer said Friday that “what the athletes need is a decision: is it happening or isn’t it?”

“I would love to play in the Olympics... But if that doesn’t happen due to the situation, I would be the first to understand,” he added.

The pandemic has killed at least 3,346,813 people worldwide since the virus first emerged in late 2019, according to an AFP tally of official data.

Sputnik vaccines reach India



Some lucky holidaymakers are enjoying the reopened tourist industry in Greek destinations. PHOTO: AFP

India meanwhile started deploying Russia’s Sputnik V coronavirus vaccine, the first foreign-made shot to be used in the country that has been reeling from an explosion in cases and deaths.

The first token batch of Sputnik vaccines -- reportedly 150,000 doses -- arrived on May 1 and a second delivery is expected in the next few days.

A number of leading India-based drugmakers have agreements for local production of Sputnik V with the aim to produce over 850 million doses of the

job per year.

India has been adding roughly as many new Covid cases daily as the rest of the world put together.

More than 260,000 Indians have died, according to official figures.

In Europe, British Prime Minister Boris Johnson warned that the arrival of the B1.617.2 variant, one of those believed to be driving the Indian surge, could delay reopening of society and the economy.

“This new variant could pose a serious disruption to our pro-

gress,” Johnson said.

Britain’s health ministry has tracked the variant in northwest England and in London.

Germany has already added the UK back onto its list of “risk areas” requiring extra checks -- but not necessarily quarantine -- for incoming travellers.

Elsewhere around the continent, tourist hotspots are opening up.

Greece kickstarted its tourism season on Friday, hoping to reverse last year’s miserable summer.

“I hope to forget this damn

Covid,” said Jil Wirries, a 28-year old student from Hanover, Germany, collecting luggage on the island of Crete.

“Everything is terrible in Germany... people are depressed... I’m so happy to be here.”

France and Spain launched tourism campaigns this week too.

But in the United States many were confused a day after the top health agency lifted all mask-wearing requirements for fully vaccinated people.

‘Milestone’

The move has raised questions about how to implement it -- the foremost being, how do you tell if a person is fully vaccinated?

It has led to a patchwork of regulations around the country. Some states never had mask mandates in the first place. Others lifted them well before the new advice. Some were reviewing the idea, but others such as Maryland and Virginia rushed to implement it.

Major companies are also weighing their options. Retail giant Walmart was among those who said Friday it would lift its mask mandate for fully vaccinated staff and customers.

But United Food and Commercial Workers, a union which represents 1.3 million people,

came out unequivocally against.

“Essential workers are still forced to play mask police for shoppers who are unvaccinated and refuse to follow local COVID safety measures. Are they now supposed to become the vaccination police?” it said.

“My initial reaction was supportive, but the more I think about it, I wish they had said, ‘Let’s do this on July 1. If you aren’t vaccinated yet, this is your chance to go do it,’” said airborne disease specialist Linsey Marr.

The WHO also said Friday that even the vaccinated should keep wearing masks in areas where the virus is spreading.

“Vaccination alone is not a guarantee against infection or against being able to transmit that infection to others,” WHO’s chief scientist Soumya Swaminathan said.

More than 580,000 people have died in the US of Covid-19. But almost 60 per cent of US adults have now received one or more doses, while cases are falling fast, and children are also now being vaccinated.

The WHO, however, urged wealthy countries to stop vaccinating children and instead donate doses to poorer nations.

SOURCE: AFP

Experts call for new standards to combat airborne disease

Building standards need to undergo a “paradigm shift” to better protect against airborne diseases, a group of experts said Thursday, drawing on hard-won lessons from the Covid pandemic.

FUTURE building designs must incorporate increased ventilation and air-cleaning measures, including filtration and disinfection using both filters and ultraviolet devices, they wrote in the journal Science.

This comes as accumulating data suggest that tiny particles containing the coronavirus that are released by breathing, speaking, sneezing, and coughing are a major driver of Covid spread.

The 39 experts, who include some of the world’s foremost environmental engineers, noted that there was a marked disparity in the way governments regulated food safety, sanitation and drinking water compared to airborne pathogens.

Aerial transmission of diseases wasn’t recognized for a long time, the authors wrote, because “it is much harder to trace airborne infections,” while food and water contamination nearly always come from an easily identifiable source.

“Airborne studies are much more difficult to conduct because air as a contagion medium is nebulous, widespread, not owned by anybody and uncontained.”

What’s more, “most modern building construction has occurred subsequent to a decline in the belief that airborne pathogens are important” and therefore lack design and construction elements to mitigate the risk.

“The ventilation rate will dif-

fer for different venues according to the activities conducted there,” they said, with higher rates required for exercising in gyms compared to resting in movie theatres.

Rates will also have to differ depending on the type of pathogen that is currently prevalent, given that emission rates and infectious doses vary.

It is also important to add control systems to adjust energy use and prevent air pollution from outside contaminants indoors, the paper added. The authors called for global indoor air quality standards (IAQ) led by the World Health Organization and the development of comprehensive standards by national governments and professional bodies.

They also called for wide use of monitors, so that members of the public are aware of the air quality in the indoor spaces they share.



Future building designs must incorporate increased ventilation and air-cleaning measures, including filtration and disinfection using both filters and ultraviolet devices, they wrote in the journal Science. PHOTO: AFP

“A paradigm shift is needed on the scale that occurred when Chadwick’s Sanitary Report in 1842 led the British government to

encourage cities to organize clean water supplies and centralized sewage systems,” they concluded.

SOURCE: AFP

Public information

Yangon Region Administration Council is working with relevant departments to help the businesses in the region. People are informed to contact the following phone numbers to get assistance for their small and medium-scaled businesses and investments which are facing some delays and working to do new businesses.

Phone numbers: 01 830 1975, 01 830 2175

Yangon Region Administration Council

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| ➢ The Global New Light of Myanmar (ရန်ကုန်) ဖုန်း-၀၁-၈၆၀၄၃၂၂၊ ၀၉-၉၈၃၉၂၄၉၁ | ➢ ကိုယ်ပွားသတင်းစာတိုက်(ကလေး) ဖုန်း-၀၇၃-၂၀၂၂၁၃၃ |
| ➢ ကိုယ်ပွားသတင်းစာတိုက်(မန္တလေး) ဖုန်း-၀၂-၄၀၃၂၇၂၈၊ ၀၂-၄၀၃၂၇၀၀ | ➢ ကိုယ်ပွားသတင်းစာတိုက်(မြစ်ကြီးဟူး) ဖုန်း-၀၇၄-၂၅၂၄၂၅၂ |
| ➢ ကိုယ်ပွားသတင်းစာတိုက်(မုံရွာ) ဖုန်း-၀၇၁-၂၀၂၆၇၃၇၊ ၀၇၁-၂၀၂၆၇၃၃ | ➢ ကိုယ်ပွားသတင်းစာတိုက်(လားရှိုး) ဖုန်း-၀၈၂-၂၂၄၄၀၆၇ |
| ➢ ကိုယ်ပွားသတင်းစာတိုက်(မော်လမြိုင်) ဖုန်း-၀၅၇-၂၀၂၇၅၂၇၊ ၀၅၇-၂၀၂၇၅၂၆ | ➢ ကိုယ်ပွားသတင်းစာတိုက်(မြိတ်) ဖုန်း-၀၅၉-၂၀၄၂၀၃၃ |



Files opened against health staff who participated in CDM activity with attempts to deteriorate peace and stability of the State

THE following nurses have been charged under Section 505-A of the Penal Code for inciting State service personnel and health staff to participate in CDM activities, themselves participating in it, supporting CDM activities and CRPH unlawful association with the aim of deteriorating the State administrative machinery.

Sr	Name	Occupation	Address	Section of Penal Code	Photo
1	Daw Alli San (Senior Nurse)	Pala Station Hospital	Pala Town, Taninthayi Region	505-a	
2	U Aung Thi (Senior Nurse)	Kyaukka Station Hospital	Palaw Town, Taninthayi Region	505-a	
3	U Htaik Aung Khant (Senior Nurse)	Pyinmana Hospital	Loikaw Town, Kayah State	505-a	
4	Daw Phyu Phyu Aye (Senior Nurse)	Bhamo Hospital	Bhamo Town, Kachin State	505-a	
5	Daw Khin Sanda Phyu (Senior Nurse)	Kalaw Hospital	Kalaw Town, Shan State (South)	505-a	

6	Daw Su Su Aung (Senior Nurse)	Zalun Hospital	Zalun Town, Ayeyawady Region	505-a	
7	Daw Chaw Su Su Pyay (Nurse)	Momauk Hospital	Momauk Town, Kachin State	505-a	
8	Daw Nwe Zin Myint (Nurse)	Kawlin Hospital	Kyunhla Town, Sagaing Region	505-a	
9	Daw Aye Chan May (Nurse)	Kawlin Hospital	Wuntho Town, Sagaing Region	505-a	
10	U Kyaw Soe Thu (Nurse)	Kengtung General Hospital	Kengtung town, Shan State (East)	505-a	

As tasks are being carried out to arrest those nurses charged, action will be taken against the the persons who admitted them under the law for the supporting those nurse who participated in CDM and CRPH activities. —MNA

Files opened against education staff who participated in CDM activity with attempts to deteriorate peace and stability of the State

THE following teachers have been charged under Section 505-A of the Penal Code for inciting State service personnel and education staff to participate in CDM activities, themselves participating in it, supporting CDM activities and CRPH unlawful association with the aim of deteriorating the State administrative machinery.

Sr	Name	Occupation	Addresst	Section of Penal Code	Photo
1	Dr Myo Min Than	Pro Rector, University of Computer Science, Pyay	Pyay, Bago Region	505-a	
2	U Tin Maung Swe	Assistant Registrar, Technological University, Pyay	Chauk, Magway Region	505-a	
3	Dr Aung Naing Thu	Associate Professor, Myitkyina University, Myitkyina	Myitkyina, Kachin State	505-a	
4	Dr San Moe San	Associate Professor, Myitkyina University, Myitkyina	Myitkyina, Kachin State	505-a	
5	Dr Kyaw Naing Oo	Lecturer, Bago University, Bago	Bago, Bago Region	505-a	

6	U Myo Myint Aung	Assistant Lecturer, Yadanarpon University, Amapura	Amarapura, Mandalay Region	505-a	
7	U Taing Kyaw Thu	Lecturer, Myitkyina University, Myitkyina	Myitkyina, Kachin State	505-a	
8	Dr May Yu Aung	Lecturer, Myitkyina University, Myitkyina	Myitkyina, Kachin State	505-a	
9	U Yan Myo Naing	Lecturer, Myitkyina University, Myitkyina	Myitkyina, Kachin State	505-a	
10	U Win Min Tun	Lecturer, Technological University, Mawlamyine	Mawlamyine, Mon State	505-a	

As tasks are being carried out to arrest those education staff charged, people are urged to inform nearby police stations about those education staff, action will be taken against the persons under the law for admitting those education staff. — MNA

NEWS IN BRIEF

Australia calls for empowering WHO after Covid panel

AUSTRALIA called Thursday for the World Health Organization to be given greater powers to investigate outbreaks after an independent panel found dithering and poor coordination when Covid-19 emerged in China.

Australia has been in the firing line from China, its largest trading partner, over steps including backing US-led calls for a probe into Covid's origins, with Beijing imposing tariffs on key products including wine and cutting off diplomatic and trade talks.

On a visit to Washington, Foreign Minister Marise Payne praised recommendations of a panel report released Wednesday and said, "We absolutely support those being taken very seriously." — AFP ■

Denmark incinerates minks culled over virus fears

DENMARK on Thursday kicked off the grisly task of unearthing and incinerating minks that were hastily buried after a mass culling sparked by fears of a mutated coronavirus strain, authorities said.

All 15 million of Denmark's minks were killed last year after it emerged they were carrying a virus strain that experts feared could avert vaccines.

Some were buried in November in two mass graves in west Denmark, sparking fears that their decomposing carcasses could pollute surrounding areas.

The government called on them to be dug up and incinerated once the risk of contagion had subsided.

On Thursday, teams started digging up some of the 13,000 tonnes (29 million pounds) of mink carcasses due to be unearthed, which were then transported to the nearby Maabjerg Energy Center (MEC) for incineration.

"I am relieved to see how the whole thing is going according to plan," agriculture minister Rasmus Prehn said in a post to Twitter. — AFP ■

Germany re-classifies UK as Covid 'risk' area over Indian variant

GERMANY'S health agency on Friday re-classified Britain as a coronavirus "risk area" over concerns about the spread of the Indian Covid-19 variant there, but travellers will still be able to avoid quarantine under updated rules.

The move by Germany's Robert Koch Institute puts Great Britain and Northern Ireland back in the lowest-level risk category, barely a month after they were taken off the list following a decline in new infections thanks to widespread vaccinations.

"The classification is due, despite (a low incidence rate), to the at least a limited occurrence of the B.1.617.2 variant in the United Kingdom," the RKI



Patients register before getting their vaccination against Covid-19 at the vaccination centre installed at the congress centre in Wiesbaden, western Germany, on January 19, 2021. **PHOTO: AFP/ARNE DEDERT**

said in a statement.

The variant, first detected in

hard-hit India, is believed to be more contagious than the original

strain and has been classified by the World Health Organization as a "variant of concern".

The British government on Friday said the variant was spreading "increasing rapidly" in parts of England, with identified cases doubling from 520 last week to 1,313 this week.

Germany this week eased rules for travellers coming from "risk areas", the lowest of three risk levels, allowing unvaccinated people to avoid the previous 10-day quarantine if they can show a negative test. Those who are fully vaccinated or can prove they have recovered from Covid by showing a positive PCR test that is at least 28 days old, do not need to quarantine. — AFP ■

Don't vaccinate kids, but give doses to Covax: WHO chief



The WHO urged wealthy countries Friday to stop vaccinating children against Covid-19 and instead donate doses to poorer nations, while warning that the pandemic's second year looked set to be more deadly. **PHOTO: AFP**

THE WHO urged wealthy countries Friday to stop vaccinating children against Covid-19 and instead donate doses to poorer nations, while warning that the

pandemic's second year looked set to be more deadly.

World Health Organization director-general Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus voiced

outrage that a number of rich countries were now vaccinating children and teenagers, while poorer states had barely begun vaccinating health workers and the most vulnerable groups.

Instead of offering jabs to young and healthy people, he called on countries to give their doses to the Covax global vaccine-sharing scheme and thereby ensure that those most in need in all countries receive protection.

"In January, I spoke about the potential unfolding of a moral catastrophe," he told a press conference.

"Unfortunately, we're now witnessing this play out. In a handful of rich countries, which bought up the majority of the supply, lower-risk groups are

now being vaccinated.

"I understand why some countries want to vaccinate their children and adolescents, but right now I urge them to reconsider and to instead donate vaccines to Covax."

"Because in low and lower-middle income countries, Covid-19 vaccine supply has not been enough to even immunize healthcare workers, and hospitals are being inundated with people that need lifesaving care urgently." Nearly 1.4 billion doses of Covid-19 vaccines have been injected in at least 210 territories around the world, according to an AFP count. Some 44 per cent of the doses have been administered in high-income countries accounting for 16 percent of the global population. — AFP ■

Singapore tightens virus curbs after infections spike

SINGAPORE announced a ban on dine-ins and cut group sizes to two people on Friday as it further toughened virus curbs to stem a rise in local transmissions.

After a partial lockdown and a rigorous regime of testing and contact tracing, Covid-19 had almost disappeared in the city-state, with authorities reporting hardly any local transmission in recent months.

But over the last few weeks cases have risen, with officials announcing several new clusters -- including one at the airport comprised of 46 cases, mostly

among people working there.

Starting on Sunday, group sizes in public or when visiting homes will be restricted to two people, down from the currently allowed five.

Dining in at restaurants will be banned, and all employees who can work from home must do so, officials said in a news conference.

The measures, which will be in place until June 13, resemble those imposed during a partial lockdown last year during which the economy suffered its worst ever recession. — AFP ■



Passengers arrive at the departure hall of Changi International Airport in Singapore on June 8, 2020, as Singapore prepares to reopen its borders after shutting them to curb the spread of the COVID-19 novel coronavirus. **PHOTO: AFP**

Blinken to seek Arctic cooperation in Greenland



Colourful houses in Kulusuk (also spelled Qulusuk), a settlement in the Sermersooq municipality located on the island of the same name on the southeastern shore of Greenland. **PHOTO: AFP**

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken will visit Greenland next week to seek cooperation as climate change rapidly transforms the Arctic, expanding roles for China and Russia, the State Department said Friday.

The trip will come on the heels of his already announced visit to Iceland for an Arctic Council meeting where Blinken will hold his first meeting with Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov amid a range of tension

between the two powers.

Blinken will start the trip Sunday in Denmark, of which Greenland is an autonomous territory, two years after an unusual but bitter row when then-president Donald Trump said he

wanted to buy the vast island.

The top US diplomat will meet Greenland's full leadership on the stop Thursday in Kangerlussuaq, the sparsely populated island's main transport hub.

"They will discuss the strong partnership between the United States and Greenland and our shared commitment to increase cooperation in the Arctic," State Department spokesman Ned Price said in a statement.

In Copenhagen, Blinken will meet Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen and other Danish leaders as well as businesspeople on issues including "combating the climate crisis," including the development of new technologies, Price said. Climate change has quickly opened up once unpenetrable waterways in the Arctic, paving the way both for shipping and greater conflict among major powers. — AFP ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

Ivory Coast PM returns home after medical treatment in France

IVORY Coast's Prime Minister Patrick Achi returned home on Friday after receiving medical treatment in France for four days, appearing on television to say he felt "on top form".

"I feel very well. I've returned on top form to get back to work," 65-year-old Achi told public broadcaster RTI at Abidjan airport, where he was welcomed by a delegation of ministers.

Political sources said Thursday that Achi had been taken to France on a special flight a few days beforehand after suffering intestinal bleeding.

Achi, a veteran government figure close to President Alassane Ouattara, is the West African country's third prime minister in the past year after his two predecessors died. — AFP ■

Moderate conservative Larijani bids for Iran presidential race

IRAN'S former parliament speaker Ali Larijani, a moderate conservative and a supporter of Tehran's nuclear deal with world powers, submitted his candidacy Saturday for next month's presidential election.

Larijani, 63, waited until the last day to register at the interior ministry after intense speculation in the media.

This is his second run for the presidency. He ran in 2005, which saw a surprise victory by the ultraconservative Mahmoud Ahmadinejad -- who is now running again as well.

Larijani, seen as a prominent establishment figure, was then in charge of Iran's nuclear

negotiations with the West, a post he resigned from two years later over serious disagreements with Ahmadinejad.

He then went on to be parliament speaker from 2008 to 2020, and currently serves as an advisor to the supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

Larijani proved to be one of the key allies of the incumbent President Hassan Rouhani, a moderate elected on a platform of ending Iran's international isolation by reaching the nuclear agreement in 2015. Rouhani is constitutionally barred from running for a third consecutive term. The nuclear deal has been on life-support since former US



Iran's former parliament speaker Ali Larijani raises his passport as he registers his candidacy for Iran's presidential elections. **PHOTO: AFP**

president Donald Trump unilaterally withdrew Washington from it and reimposed punishing sanctions on Tehran, and ongoing talks in Vienna are seeking to

revive it. The accord has been a constant target of criticism by Rouhani's opponents, and its fate is expected to one of the major stakes in the 2021 poll. — AFP ■

Russia lists US, Czech Republic as 'unfriendly states'

RUSSIA on Friday formally designated the United States and the Czech Republic as "unfriendly states" amid the biggest crisis in ties between Moscow and Washington in years.

The Russian government released a decree signed by Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin that was accompanied by a list of "unfriendly states" that "have carried out unfriendly actions" against Russia, Russian nationals or Russian entities.

The list now includes the US and the Czech Republic.

The Czech embassy will be allowed to employ no more than 19 Russian nationals and the US embassy none at all, Moscow said.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said on Friday that Moscow remained ready for dialogue, state news agency TASS reported, stressing the fact that Russia had now only two nations on its "unfriendly states" list. — AFP ■

Two tornadoes strike China, killing at least 12

TWO tornadoes that struck central and eastern China killed at least 12 people and injured more than 400, authorities said Saturday.

Violent winds of more than 260 kilometres per hour (160 miles per hour) blasted the central city of Wuhan on Friday night.

Eight people died and more than 280 were injured there, authorities said, adding that around 30 homes had collapsed.

Vehicles were crushed by falling objects, trees uprooted, buildings partially destroyed



A tornado packing winds of more than 260 kph (160 mph) hit Wuhan, leaving eight dead and hundreds injured. **PHOTO: AFP**

and electricity pylons felled, leaving more than 26,000 homes without power. The gale damaged two construction cranes, one of which toppled onto the site below, causing significant damage.

In Suzhou, near Shanghai, another tornado with winds of more than 200 kilometres per hour wreaked havoc.

Four people were killed and one remains missing, according to local authorities.

Images shared on social media showed a black whirlwind which left a trail of destruction.

In May, a windstorm caused the deaths of 11 people in a different town also close to Shanghai. — AFP ■

Chip crunch to reduce Mazda global output by 100,000 units in FY 2021

MAZDA Motor Corp. said Friday it expects chip shortages to reduce its global production by 100,000 vehicles in the current fiscal year, equivalent to 8 per cent of last year's output.

Nevertheless, the carmaker plans to limit the reduction in shipments in the year through March 2022 to 70,000 vehicles by making use of inventories, Managing Executive Officer Tetsuya Fujimoto said in a telephone conference on the automaker's latest earnings.

Of the 100,000 vehi-

cles, Mazda expects an output cut of 14,000 vehicles in April and 10,000 in May, following a combined production cut of 10,000 vehicles in the final two months of the last fiscal year.

The automaker did not disclose its production plan for the current business year but plans to ship 1.14 million vehicles worldwide. It built 1.17 million vehicles in the year ended March 31.

The automaker based in Hiroshima Prefecture is the latest in a line of domestic peers such as

Nissan Motor Co. and Mitsubishi Motors Corp. to project lower production volumes due to the chip supply bottleneck.

The auto industry is grappling with a shortage of semiconductors as the pandemic boosted demand for products that use them, ranging from laptops and game consoles. The situation was worsened by widespread chip-manufacturing disruptions in Texas due to the severe weather in February and a fire at a chip plant of Japan's Renesas Electronics Corp. in March. — Kyodo News ■



A production line at Mazda Motor Corp.'s plant in Hofu, Yamaguchi Prefecture, is seen in May 2018. PHOTO: KYODO

Walmart to end mask mandate for vaccinated shoppers, staff



Walmart is one of the first major US corporations to end its mask-wearing requirement. PHOTO: AFP

US retail giant Walmart on Friday said customers who are fully vaccinated against Covid-19 no longer have to wear masks in their stores, and staff can do the same starting next week.

"Beginning today, vaccinated customers and members are welcome to shop without a mask, and we will continue to request that non-vaccinated customers and members wear face coverings in our stores and clubs," the company said in a statement, while adding that masks would still be required where mandated by local authorities. Employees who are more than two weeks past their vaccination can stop wearing masks from May 18, the company said, and all employees are eligible for a \$75 bonus if they prove they have got their

job. "These are positive developments. We can do this. We've been through a lot this year, and now we need to do our part to finish this," Walmart said in a statement signed by corporate leadership.

The announcement follows the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention's lifting on Thursday of mask-wearing guidance for people who are fully vaccinated against Covid-19, a decision that came over a year after it was first issued at the beginning of the pandemic that has killed more than 585,000 people in the United States.

Walmart mandated customers wear face masks starting last July, and is now among the first major American corporations to end the requirement. — AFP ■

US industrial output rises slowly in April: Fed

US industrial production rose in April but was held back by falling auto manufacturing amid the sector's crippling semiconductor shortage, the Federal Reserve said Friday.

The total is far above the same month of 2020, when the economy was largely shut down due to the Covid-19 pandemic, but the data reflect some of the bottlenecks businesses have reported as they struggle to return to normal.

The data also revised March's increase to a 2.4 per cent gain, one percentage point higher than originally reported, according to the report.

Total output in-

creased 0.7 per cent last month compared to March, in line with expectations, as manufacturing gained a modest 0.4 per cent -- held back by a 4.3 per cent drop in motor vehicles and parts,

the Fed said.

The report said in many industries "results were mixed, with supply chain difficulties possibly hindering production."

Automakers have been forced to slow or

shutdown plants amid a worldwide shortage of computer chips.

Oren Klachkin of Oxford Economics blamed the slowing on the supply bottlenecks, but was not overly concerned.

"While supply chain and labor shortages will temporarily increase production and inflation pressures, they won't completely derail the expansion," he said in an analysis of the data.

The report said utilities rose 2.6 per cent in April, recovering some of the nine per cent drop in the prior month "when unseasonably warm weather reduced demand for heating." — AFP ■



Motor vehicle production fell in the United States, hindered by a shortage of computer chips. PHOTO: AFP

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
M.V AEGEAN EXPRESS VOY. NO. (210N/S)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V AEGEAN EXPRESS VOY. NO. (210N/S)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **16-5-2021** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **MIP** where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 am to 11:20 am and 12 noon to 4 pm to Claim's Day now declared as the third day after final discharge of cargo from the Vessel.

No claims against this vessel will be admitted after the Claims Day.
Phone No: **2301185**

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S CONTINENTAL SHIPPING LINES

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
M.V KOTA HALUS VOY. NO. (KHLT017N/S)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V KOTA HALUS VOY. NO. (KHLT017N/S)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **16-5-2021** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **AWPT** where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 am to 11:20 am and 12 noon to 4 pm to Claim's Day now declared as the third day after final discharge of cargo from the Vessel.

No claims against this vessel will be admitted after the Claims Day.
Phone No: **2301185**

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S ADVANCE CONTAINER LINES

Russian oil giant Rosneft back in black as prices recover



Rosneft chief Igor Sechin meeting Russian President Vladimir Putin. PHOTO: AFP

RUSSIAN oil giant Rosneft said Friday that its earnings were back in the black in the first quarter after oil prices recovered following Moscow's production deals with OPEC.

State-controlled Rosneft reported a net profit of 149 billion rubles (\$2 billion) in the first quarter, compared with a loss of 156 billion rubles in the same period last year.

It is the latest major oil company to report a spike in quarterly profits thanks to rising crude prices.

Global oil prices, already low amid growing competition, were hit hard by the onset of

the coronavirus pandemic last year, with demand hammered as many countries shut down swathes of their economies in a bid to slow the spread of Covid-19.

That caused a glut in supplies and a plunge in prices that briefly saw some turn negative.

Russia and other major producers joined with the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) in agreeing a series of production limits that helped prop up prices.

In recent months prices have returned to pre-pandemic levels, hovering around \$65 per barrel. — AFP ■

Expect 'choppiness' in US economic recovery: White House

EXPECT "choppiness" in the US economic recovery as different sectors bounce back at varying speeds, but inflation will not be a longterm problem, a top White House official said Friday.

Cecilia Rouse, chair of the Council of Economic Advisers, said the current turbulence is unpredictable.

For example, she joked, the government health authority's ruling on Thursday that vaccinated people can safely drop

their coronavirus masks suddenly means "we now anticipate an oversupply of masks and an undersupply of lipstick."

"In all seriousness, different sectors of the economy will come back online at different times," she told reporters. "Given the extraordinary and unprecedented circumstances of the pandemic, it will remain difficult for analysts to accurately forecast economic data."

Rouse said this week's fig-

ures showing a leap in consumer prices, as well as last week's hugely disappointing employment data, need to be seen in context.

An average of half a million jobs have been created every month since January, she said, while the inflation figures reflected wild, yet temporary swings in economic activity as Americans emerge from partial lockdowns — particularly a return to air travel and buying cars. — AFP ■

luxury goods can now be sold in fractions



A 1986 Ferrari Testarossa Spider Valeo, a luxury item which could be hypothetically 'owned' through fractional ownership. PHOTO: AFP

ANYONE can easily own a Basquiat painting, a pair of Yeezy sneakers or even a Ferrari — at least, that's the promise of a growing number of fractional ownership platforms that sell shares of these rare items, starting at just a few dollars.

One platform, Masterworks, in spring 2020 turned the \$6 million painting *The Mosque* by Jean-Michel Basquiat into 284,420 shares at \$20 each.

With fractional ownership, there's no chance of hanging the painting in a buyer's home, parking a Lamborghini in their garage or storing six bottles of Romanee-Conti wine in their cellar.

But by owning at least a piece of the property — at least on paper, like the shares of a publicly listed company — anyone can now directly benefit from an increase in the item's value, just like a wealthy collector.

Whether it's paintings or baseball cards, "it's not a new industry", says Ezra Levine, the

CEO of Collectable, a platform that specializes in sports paraphernalia.

"It's not like cryptocurrencies where it was literally invented five or 10 years ago," he said.

"It's just that the ways that people can participate in (the market) and experience it, enjoy it, have just dramatically changed in the last six months."

Sluggo, the username of a collector who preferred to stay anonymous, made a 500 per cent profit on a few shares of a box of Pokemon cards, initially priced at \$125,000. The platform Rally had offered the box via an IPO, similar to the listing of a company on the stock market and also subject to controls by the US market regulator, the SEC.

"These fractional platforms just open up the class to people who can't afford to buy a full (Michael) Jordan (trading) card," said John Schuck, 43, whose holdings amount to about \$20,000 in cars, paintings or sports memorabilia. — AFP ■

As Covid ebbs, tourists make their comeback to US capital

WITH the park in front of the White House reopening this week, selfie-snapping tourists have suddenly reappeared.

Washington DC, home to some of the toughest anti-Covid regulations in the country, is now reopening, highlighting the United States's steady transition back to normality.

Boasting imposing landmarks such as the US Capitol and the Supreme Court, Washington began reopening the doors of its museums on Friday, including the National Museum of African American History and Culture, and the National Portrait Gallery, which will soon host a painting of former president Donald Trump.

By next Friday, six museums run by the famed Smithsonian Institution, and the National Zoo, will once again welcome visitors as vaccination rates climb and infections continue to plunge.

The question now is how to attract more tourists and spur an economic rebound after a year of pandemic restrictions that left the US federal capital city, normally a hub for conferences and meetings of international institutions, stricken.

"For the moment, I have very few customers," said Ngre Phung, whose mobile souvenir

shop is parked near the African American museum.

So far, DC residents, who are packing the terraces of restaurants and bars, haven't rushed downtown to peruse Phung's selection of caps, T-shirts and other trinkets. Instead the shopkeeper relies heavily on visitors to nearby museums. — AFP ■



Tourists visit the National Mall in Washington, D.C. on May 14, 2021, which includes the Washington Monument obelisk. PHOTO: AFP

Israel escalation puts new Gulf partners in diplomatic bind

THE deadly escalation between Israel and the Palestinians has embarrassed Gulf states which forged ties with the Jewish state and put a strain on their Abraham Accords that were billed as a game-changer.

The bloodshed has prompted condemnation from Israel's new Arab partners, at a time when Muslims have been celebrating the end of the holy month of Ramadan.

Less than a year after signing normalisation agreements with Israel, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Bahrain, Sudan and Morocco have been forced to change course and turn to critical rhetoric.

"These statements are largely intended as a public relations exercise towards a domestic and regional Arab audience that continues to overwhelmingly support the Palestinians," Elham Fakhro, an analyst at the



(L-R) The leaders of Bahrain, Israel and the UAE with then US president Donald Trump after the signing of the Abraham Accords. **PHOTO: AFP**

Crisis Group think tank, told AFP. The Abraham Accords swept away decades of consensus and were condemned as "treason" by Palestinian leaders

who feared they undercut their demands for a homeland.

They were struck at the urging of then US president Donald Trump, who hailed the "dawn of

a new Middle East" as his son-in-law and advisor Jared Kushner dismissed the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as a mere "real estate dispute". — AFP ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

Armenia asks Putin for military support after Azerbaijan 'infiltration'

ARMENIAN Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan said Friday he asked Russian President Vladimir Putin for military support after accusing Azerbaijani troops of crossing the country's southern border and trying to claim territory.

The United States urged an immediate pullback by Azerbaijan amid mounting international concern after last year's war between the arch foes over the disputed region of Nagorno-Karabakh.

Speaking at an extraordinary session of Armenia's parliament on Friday evening, Pashinyan said he had asked Putin "for the Russian Federation's assistance, including military assistance."

He also said that French President Emmanuel Macron "is considering the possibility of putting the issue on the agenda of the UN Security Council." — AFP ■

Italy's Salvini avoids trial in one of two migrant cases



Salvini's party takes a hard line on migrants. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

ITALIAN far-right leader Matteo Salvini avoided trial on Friday

on charges he illegally detained migrants at sea, ending one of his

legal troubles even as another related case looms.

Judge Nunzio Sarpietro in the Sicilian city of Catania threw out the case against the populist head of the League party, following recommendations in April by the prosecutor that he should not be tried.

Salvini, known for an "Italians first" policy, was accused of abusing his powers in July 2019 when he was interior minister by blocking 116 migrants from disembarking from the Italian Gregoretti coastguard boat.

Salvini had staunchly defended himself, saying he had

been defending the country while carrying out his so-called "closed ports" policy amid a surge of migrants arriving on Italy's shores after crossing the Mediterranean.

Italy's Senate voted last year to strip the politician of his parliamentary immunity, paving the way for the trial.

After leaving court, Salvini said the ruling shows that "a minister who defended the dignity and the borders of Italy is a minister who simply did his duty".

However, he still faces trial in September in a separate but similar case. — AFP ■

West Bank violence, Gaza air strikes as Palestinian toll mounts

MORE than 300 people were wounded Monday in renewed clashes between Palestinians and Israeli police at the flashpoint Al-Aqsa mosque compound, as an Israeli celebration of its 1967 takeover of Jerusalem risked inflaming tensions.

Israeli fighter jets hit targets in central Gaza overnight, the army said Saturday, after a day of deadly violence rocked the West Bank and unprecedented unrest persisted inside Israel.

Despite intensifying diplomatic efforts to ease five days of fighting between Israel and Palestinian militants in Gaza, Israel's air force struck several sites in the strip overnight, while rockets again tore towards the Jewish state.

Overall Palestinian fatalities from strikes on Gaza have reached 126 -- including 31 children -- with 950 injured. — AFP ■

Venezuela paper seized in defamation case filed by top leader

VENEZUELAN authorities on Friday seized the headquarters of a newspaper critical of President Nicolas Maduro's government, to cover \$13 million in compensation that a court had ordered it to pay a top official in a defamation case.

"At this very moment, a judge surrounded by national guards entered the building of El Nacional to seize everything," tweeted newspaper president-director Miguel Henrique Otero.

In April, Venezuela's Su-

preme Court of Justice ordered the daily to pay \$13.4 million for causing "serious moral damage" to Diosdado Cabello, the second most powerful person in Venezuela after Maduro.

"The process of paying the compensation has begun," Cabello said on Twitter.

In 2015, Cabello, second in command of the governing Socialist Party, took the newspaper to court for reproducing a report by Spanish newspaper ABC that accused him of links to drug trafficking. — AFP ■



A woman holds up the final printed edition of El Nacional on December 14, 2018, with its front page reading "El Nacional is a warrior and will keep on fighting". **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

Arjan Bhullar bags ONE Heavyweight belt with TKO win over Brandon Vera

INDIAN Mixed Martial Arts fighter Arjan Bhullar crowned the ONE Championship Heavyweight world title yesterday night after beating former titleholder Brandon Vera of the Philippines via Technical Knockout (TKO) at round two of the main event fight named ONE: DANGAL at Singapore Indoor Stadium.

Brandon Vera relied on stand fight while Arjan Bhullar used a mixed fight style of ground and stand.

Round one just finished with equal play as both fighters took too much time to reach their targets.

But the round two saw more energetic efforts of the Indian fighter Arjan Bhullar.

Just before the end of round two, Arjan Bhullar landed some strong punches on Brandon Vera, and that caused Vera to fall onto the ground and lost with a technical knockout.

After the win, Bhullar has expressed his overwhelmed feeling upon the special fight.

"India, we got one now," Bhullar said. "Your first world champion. Let's go."

"We were going to box him up, get in and out range, wrestle him, pressure him, break him. That was the game plan," he continued. "I knew I was going to hurt him. My coaches knew it. I'm well trained, guys. I've been with the best since day one."

"I have reached the pinnacle of this sport," Bhullar said. "Now, I wanna attack the pro-wrestling industry. AWE, WWE, I'm coming for you guys next. Consider this a warning", the Indian fighter added.

Next, the co-main event featured a Muay Thai fight between Tawanchai PK Saenchai and Sean Clancy. Saenchai delivered a super head kick knockout in the third round. —GNLM ■



Indian MMA fighter Arjan Bhullar seen with ONE Heavyweight World Championship belt after his thrilling fight against Vera in Singapore on 15 May. **PHOTO: ONE CHAMPIONSHIP**

Leicester beat Chelsea to claim first FA Cup



Leicester City's English-born Jamaican defender Wes Morgan (L) and Leicester City's Danish goalkeeper Kasper Schmeichel (L) hold up the winner's trophy as the Leicester players celebrate victory after the English FA Cup final football match between Chelsea and Leicester City at Wembley Stadium in north west London on 15 May 2021. **PHOTO: AFP**

LEICESTER won the FA Cup for the first time in the club's 137-year history on Saturday as Youri Tielemans's sensational strike beat Chelsea 1-0 in front of 22,000 fans at Wembley.

The largest crowd for a sports event in England since

the coronavirus pandemic hit 14 months ago were treated to a goal worthy to win any trophy as the Belgian midfielder blasted into the top corner on 63 minutes.

Kasper Schmeichel produced a stunning save to deny

Mason Mount late on and Chelsea also had a goal ruled out by a VAR review for offside.

Five years after the Foxes stunned the Premier League's giants to become champions, Leicester have now claimed English football's other prestigious trophy at the fifth time of asking.

Four times they had previously lost the final, but the last of those was 52 years ago.

A historic week for Brendan Rodgers's men could get even better as they are on the verge of sealing a place in next season's Champions League.

The sides meet again in three days' time at Stamford Bridge in a pivotal clash to decide who secures a top-four finish in the Premier League.

Chelsea need a quick response after losing for just the fourth time in 27 games since Thomas Tuchel replaced the sacked Frank Lampard in January. — AFP ■

'On this train until Wimbledon,' says Federer as Swiss legend returns

ROGER Federer resumes his injury comeback on Swiss home soil in Geneva next week with the 39-year-old legend insisting: "We're on this train until Wimbledon".

Federer returned to the courts in March, having been out for more than a year following two knee surgeries, winning his first match in Qatar before losing his second. Doha was his first appearance since January 2020 and an Australian Open semi-final defeat to Novak Djokovic.

Federer was due to play in the May 2-9 Madrid Open, but made a late decision to switch to the lower-profile Geneva event where he should have a better chance of getting on a roll.

"Doha was just a little

test of how I was doing," 20-time Grand Slam title winner Federer told Leman Bleu television.

"Geneva is more than just a little test, to see if I can play several matches in a row.

I know the danger of losing early is always there."

Geneva should test what sort of shape Federer is in ahead of the May 30-June 13 French Open before he targets his two major goals — a ninth Wimbledon title and a singles gold medal at the Tokyo Olympics.

"He is not coming to say hello," Geneva tournament director Thierry Grin told the Swiss magazine L'Illustré.

"He is coming to win matches before his big goal: Wimbledon." — AFP ■

'Dangerous' McIlroy at Kiawah seeking first major since '14

RORY MCILROY arrives at the 103rd PGA Championship seeking his first major triumph since 2014 after snapping an 18-month US PGA Tour win drought last week. And it won't hurt that the four-time major winner from Northern Ireland is returning to Kiawah Island, where he won the 2012 PGA by a record-setting eight-stroke margin.

"Hopefully history repeats itself," McIlroy said. "But I'm just happy that I can hit the golf shots I need to under pressure. "You just need to get yourself in the position to put yourself under pressure to hit the shots that really matter."

After struggling through the Covid-19 pandemic while playing without spectators, McIlroy has found his form and won for the first time since

the 2019 WGC Shanghai event. McIlroy won a third career victory at Quail Hollow and his first since becoming a father, wife Erica having given birth to daughter Poppy last year.

"He's coming off a win," 2015 PGA winner Jason Day of Australia said. "He's very confident right now, so going to be very dangerous."

Nobody recognizes that fact more than McIlroy, who is encouraged and confident after seeing hard work with new coach Pete Cowen pay off.

"This victory is very important going into Kiawah," he said. "I played really well there last time. I'll go up there and try to do my homework and re-familiarize myself with the layout a little bit. — AFP ■



Four-time major winner Rory McIlroy celebrates his PGA victory at Quail Hollow with his wife Erica and their daughter Poppy on May 9. **PHOTO: AFP**